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- (a) hydrating guar gum splits, in which the guar gum splits comprise polygalactomannan;
  - (b) processing the hydrated splits, said processing step including the substeps, in either order, of flaking the splits and extruding the splits;
  - (c) grinding said processed splits into a powder; and
  - (d) drying the powder.

Please add the following new claims:

41. (New) A method of manufacturing a powder having improved hydration characteristics, the method comprising the steps of:

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- (a) hydrating guar gum splits;
  - (b) processing the hydrated splits, said processing step including the substeps, in either order, of flaking the splits and extruding the splits;
  - (c) grinding said processed splits into a powder, the powder disposed to hydrate faster than a corresponding powder made without the extruding substep in step (b); and
  - (d) drying the powder.

42. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the powder is disposed to comprise a hydration acceleration rate that is faster than a corresponding powder made without the extruding substep in step (b).

43. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the powder is disposed to comprise a hydration acceleration rate that is slowed down less by lower temperature than a corresponding powder made without the extruding substep in step (b).

44. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 70 degrees F.

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45. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 40 degrees F.

46. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 50% hydration after about 60 seconds at about 70 degrees F.

B2 47. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 50% hydration after about 90 seconds at about 40 degrees F.

48. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 70 degrees F and after about 5 minutes at about 40 degrees F, and wherein the powder is further disposed to achieve about 50% hydration after about 60 seconds at about 70 degrees F and after about 90 seconds at about 40 degrees F.

49. (New) The method of claim 41, further including the step of screening the powder after drying.

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50. (New) A method of manufacturing a thickening agent for fluids, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) hydrating plant seed endosperms that contain a polymer having fluid thickening properties;
- (b) processing the hydrated endosperms, said processing step including the substeps, in either order, of flaking the endosperms and extruding the endosperms;
- (c) grinding said processed endosperms into a powder, the powder disposed to hydrate faster than a corresponding powder made without the extruding substep in step (b); and
- (d) drying the powder.

B2 51. (New) The method of claim 50, wherein the powder is disposed to comprise a hydration acceleration rate that is faster than a corresponding powder made without the extruding substep in step (b).

52. (New) The method of claim 50, wherein the powder is disposed to comprise a hydration acceleration rate that is slowed down less by lower temperature than a corresponding powder made without the extruding substep in step (b).

53. (New) The method of claim 50, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 70 degrees F.

54. (New) The method of claim 50, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 40 degrees F.

55. (New) The method of claim 50, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 50% hydration after about 60 seconds at about 70 degrees F.

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56. (New) The method of claim 50, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 50% hydration after about 90 seconds at about 40 degrees F.

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57. (New) The method of claim 50, wherein the powder is disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 70 degrees F and after about 5 minutes at about 40 degrees F, and wherein the powder is further disposed to achieve about 50% hydration after about 60 seconds at about 70 degrees F and after about 90 seconds at about 40 degrees F.

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58. (New) An improved method for manufacturing a fluid thickener in powder form wherein plant seed endosperms are hydrated, flaked, ground and dried, the endosperms containing a polymer having fluid thickening characteristics, the improvement comprising:

extruding the endosperms after hydrating but before grinding, said extruding performed either before or after the endosperms are flaked, and wherein the fluid thickener in powder form is disposed to hydrate faster than a corresponding powder made without the extruding step.

59. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the fluid thickener in powder form is disposed to comprise a hydration acceleration rate that is faster than a corresponding fluid thickener in powder form made without the extruding step.

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60. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the fluid thickener in powder form is disposed to comprise a hydration acceleration rate that is slowed down less by lower temperature than a corresponding fluid thickener in powder form made without the extruding step.

61. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the fluid thickener in powder form is disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 70 degrees F.

62. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the fluid thickener in powder form is disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 40 degrees F.

63. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the fluid thickener in powder form is disposed to achieve about 50% hydration after about 60 seconds at about 70 degrees F.

64. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the fluid thickener in powder form is disposed to achieve about 50% hydration after about 90 seconds at about 40 degrees F.

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65. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the fluid thickener in powder form is disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 70 degrees F and after about 5 minutes at about 40 degrees F, and wherein the fluid thickener in powder form is further disposed to achieve about 50% hydration after about 60 seconds at about 70 degrees F and after about 90 seconds at about 40 degrees F.

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66. (New) A method of manufacturing a powder having improved hydration characteristics, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) hydrating guar gum splits, the guar gum splits disposed to comprise polygalactomannan, and wherein the splits are hydrated to about a 20%-80% moisture content at about 80-200 degrees F;

(b) processing the hydrated splits, said processing step including the substeps, in either order, of flaking the splits and extruding the splits, and wherein the hydrated splits are extruded through a 2"-8" diameter barrel;

32 (c) grinding said processed splits into a powder, the powder disposed to hydrate faster than a corresponding powder made without the extruding substep in step (b), and wherein the powder is further disposed to achieve about 90% hydration after about 5 minutes at about 70 degrees F and after about 5 minutes at about 40 degrees F, and wherein the powder further achieves about 50% hydration after about 60 seconds at about 70 degrees F and after about 90 seconds at about 40 degrees F;

(d) drying the powder, and wherein the powder is dried to a 1%-10% moisture content; and

(e) screening the powder through a 100 mesh sieve.

67. (New) The method of claim 66, wherein the guar gum splits have been chemically modified.

68. (New) The method of claim 66, wherein the guar gum splits have been genetically modified.

69. (New) The method of claim 66, wherein the powder is disposed to comprise a hydration acceleration rate that is faster than a corresponding powder made without said extruding substep in step (b).

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70. (New) The method of claim 66, wherein the powder is disposed to comprise a hydration acceleration rate that is slowed down less by lower temperature than a corresponding powder made without said extruding substep in step (b).

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